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ABSTRACT

This paper reports the perspectives of county-level supervisors who have been important in advancing state-mandated school reforms in West Virginia. A chronological background on West Virginia school reform from 1982 through 1997 covers legislation related to the "Recht Decision," state reform initiatives, creation of the School Building Authority, and rural opposition to school consolidation. County financial disparities and accreditation indicators are reviewed. The qualitative research was done in two parts: a survey of county-level supervisors in the 55 counties (with 47 respondents) and interviews with 20 county-level supervisors. Three types of themes are reported: rural, school reform, and central office supervision. The rural themes include absence of a "rural lens" in administrator thinking, aversion to using the term "rural," and cultural resistance to change. School reform themes include the highly centralized and state-controlled curriculum; three eras of reform (school effectiveness, empowerment, and data obsession); local reform successes (staff development); supervisor assertiveness toward reform; "local fit" of reforms; windows of opportunity for change (school board elections, grant funding cycles, staff changes); reform challenges (test score pressures, high expectations, teacher morale, curriculum designed to "export" students, problematic school-community relations); scarcity of resources; and staff recruitment. Central office supervisor themes include a portrayal of supervisors as being survivors of downsizing, being overworked, and using staff development and grant writing as supervisory tools; the absence of curriculum development as a tool for change; school reform as central to the supervisory role; and the consequences of site-based management. Appendixes contain details of the research design, the survey questionnaire, and summary of survey results. (Contains 83 references.) (SAS)

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The Role of Supervisors in Rural School Reform

A paper presented to the

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The Role of Supervisors in Rural School Reform
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this research is to report the perspectives of selected central office supervisors who have been important to advancing state mandated reform in West Virginia, a state fully immersed in Appalachia and a state highly centralized in its approach to educational policy making, school reform, and control of county school systems. The research is qualitative in design and includes mailed surveys and in-person interviews of central office supervisors as sources of data. The purpose of this paper is to report preliminary results of the research 1) to those interviewed as a step of confirmation, and 2) to those interested in rural schools research.

Much has been written about school reform, but not the place of supervisors in it. Limited research has been done on the role of central office supervisors in general (e.g., Pajak, 1989; Tracy, 1996), on their role in policy implementation (e.g., Spillane, 1996), and even less on their role in rural school reform (e.g., Killian,1990). This research makes a contribution by making the role of supervisor in rural school reform more "visible," especially as central office staff continue to dwindle, as enrollments decrease, and as rural schools are asked to continue to do more with less.

This research draws on and combines the following bodies of writing and research in: 1) rural schools (e.g., Porter, 1996-1997; Schmuck & Schmuck, 1993; DeYoung & Lawrence, 1995), 2) school reform leadership, policy and implementation (e.g., Hertert, 1996; U. S. Department of Education, 1996), 3) supervision (e.g., Pajak), and 5) curriculum (e.g., Spillane, 1994; 1996). These multiple perspectives in combination shed light on the supervisors' role in rural school reform. This research also builds on earlier research (Hazi, 1994; 1989).

This paper contains four major sections: Background, Respondents, Results, and Conclusions. Appendices include the: Research Design (A), which includes the mailed survey and interview protocol, and Summary of Survey Results (B). In the section of Results, themes derived from the interviews are grouped according to the three major concepts of the research: rural, school reform, and central office supervision. While interrelated, the themes are grouped within a section to best portray the role of the central office supervisor in rural school reform.The themes of in-depth interviews of twenty (20) central office supervisors were:

• A rural lens is noticeably absent from the thinking of most of these central office supervisors.

• There seems to be an aversion to using the term "rural."

• Supervisors generally maintain reactive and "selectively assertive" stances towards rural school reform.

• Staff development is their most frequently cited reform success.

• Supervisors liked some state mandates more than others, depending on "local fit."

• Change in rural schools occurs through "windows of opportunity" calibrated to school board elections, grant funding cycles, and/or change in superintendents.

• The most frequently cited reform challenge was the state's pressure of test scores.

• Supervisors respond to test pressure by providing materials, services, workshops, test interpretation and analysis at the building level, test taking skills, and supervisory services.

• High expectations (for teachers and students), the community (distrust), and scarce resources (of money and time) were also reported as reform challenges.

• Supervisors (and their systems) need a breather in the process of school reform.

• Central office supervisors are visible survivors of downsizing with special expertise.

• Staff development and grant writing were the most frequently cited reform tools.

• Curriculum development was cited the least.

• The roles of supervisors are "reform agent" and "agent of the state."

• Site-based management has consequences for supervisors.

Background: West Virgina and School Reform

West Virginia is the only state fully immersed in the Appalachian region and is the second most rural with 64% of its citizens living in rural areas. It has an average of 6.3% unemployment, ranks third in the nation in coal production, and has growing eco-tourism and service-providing industries. The school board is often the largest employer in rural counties. While the state has experienced a moderate increase in population in the last five years (1.8 million), the school age population has decreased and the median age of 37.7 is now the highest in the nation. It is the third safest state and has the lowest jail-going rate in the south. Forty percent of the 1.3 million residents, who relocate to nearby Ohio, Virginia, and Florida, are expected to return. It ranks 49th with a per capita income of $18,444. ("Income..," 1997; Meyers, 1997; "Most W.Va. natives...," 1997; "Population grows...," 1997; Smith, 1997; "State gains residents, " 1997; "State jailing rate..., 1995; "Unemployment..," 1997; "W. Va. third...," 1997; "W. Va. ranked..," 1995)

West Virginia has a K-12 enrollment of 310,511. Forty percent of its children live in poverty or near poverty conditions. Fifty-five percent of the state's budget goes to K-12 public education which amounts to $1.8 billion dollars. In 1993-94 it spent an average of $5,247 on its pupils, ranking 23 in the country and lower than the national average of $5,363. It ranks 35th in the nation in teacher salaries with an average salary of $32,155. Its enrollment has decreased by 8.9%, its personnel has decreased by 5%, and its schools have decreased from 1,083 to 848 due to state encouraged consolidation. It has one of the lowest pupil-teacher ratios (1:15) (Blackford, 1995; Mason, 1997; Margolin, 1996; Miller, 1997; "State teacher...," 1997).

Sixteen of its 55 county school systems operate in a financial deficit. Such deficits are likely to occur in the more rural counties where excess levies are unfunded by citizen vote and where there are problems with overall financial management (Margolin, 1996). Rural, as defined by the state according to enrollment and geographic size is sparsely populated with "10 or fewer students per square mile" (Special Task Force on Rural School Districts, 1989, p. 2).

The Catalyst

The catalyst for reform was a parent in one of the property-poor counties of the state who filed a successful suit claiming that her children were not receiving a "thorough and efficient" education as required by the state's constitution. The 1982 case, Pauley v. Bailey, or more popularly known as the "Recht Decision," appeared shortly before the national call for excellence as manifiested in the 1983 A Nation at Risk. West Virginia is one of a dozen states whose finance systems have been ruled unconstitutional (White, 1997). The case and

its progeny (an earlier version, Pauley v. Kelly, and the later Tomblin v. Gainer) are among those publicized. It has been the object of scrutiny for more than two decades by its residents (e.g., Arrington, 1994; Hazi, 1983, 1985, 1989, 1994; Meckley 1989; Meckley, Hartnett, Yeager, 1987; Meckley & Hazi, 1998; Perry & Harmon, 1992; Seal & Harmon, 1995; Truby, 1983), as well as by the national media (e.g. "Excerpts...," 1983; Mirga, 1988; Mirga & Mathis, 1988; Montague, 1987; Sher, 1983a; Sirkin, 1985; Ward, 1985, 1982) because of its scope and impact on all phases of public education to include finance, curriculum, personnel, transportation, facilities, equipment, and materials.

Among the more notable aspects of its reform history is the emergence of a short-lived rural schools focus in the state. As chronicled in Seal and Harmon (1995), when 22 education-related bills were passed in 1988 alone as a response to Recht, "several county school superintendents argued that statewide reform must consider the uniqueness of the state's sparse, rural school districts" (p. 120). This then prompted the state superintendent to establish a Special Task Force on Rural School Districts (1989). The report first "shocked" the legislature with their profile of rural school children, then rural concerns "fell on deaf ears" (Seal & Harmon, 1995, p.120). With a change in state superintendents, the "rural cause" lost its priority:

> Moreover, creation of a state School Building Authority put in place a mechanism to close schools with small enrollments and poor 'economies of scale.' The 'politics of poverty' and high desire to link education with economic development resulted in major disincentives for persons concerned about the value of small, rural schools. In essence, an urban model of schooling was strongly supported, if for no other reason than the state had lost 21% of its population 18 years of age and younger during the decade of the 1980s and needed to 'downsize' the education sytem (H. Harmon, personal communication, 1998, February 13)

Since then small efforts, that emerged to establish counter groups to the movement (e.g., Coalition for Rural West Virginians), were short lived. "Attention today focuses around court battles involving rural communities who want to keep their schools and the School Building Authority (e.g., Circleville School in Pendelton County)" (H. Harmon, personal communication, 1998, February 13).

Of what is known about the more rural school systems in the state, they:

- have already undergone extensive consolidation,
- have little or no commerce to help increase the tax base,
- are less likely to have an excess levy pass,
- have an average of 5.15 students per square mile,
- have 51 percent of their students on free or reduced lunches,

• have a higher percentage of their students in special education,

• spend a higher percentage of their budget on transportation (which is 40% higher than the state average) and whose children begin and end their school day with a long bus ride,

• employ more itinerant (traveling) teachers,

• are more likely to use Step 7 funds for basic costs (e.g. textbooks and utilities), and

• have students who come from a family whose income is below the state average, who have been unemployed and drop out of school (Special Task Force on Rural School Districts, 1989).

Its Progress

Since 1985, 200 legislative bills have been enacted (a few of them omnibus laws) that have:

> ...established performance measures stressing accountability to the public;...encourage[d] the active and meaningful participation of teachers in the management of their schools; and ....increased the involvement of parents, communities, and businesses in the educational programs of our schools and our state (Marockie, 1995, p.4)

Depending on the measures used, there's both good news and bad news regarding the state's progress since the Recht Decision.

An accounting of state initiatives in the Annual Report of the West Virginia Department of Education (1995-96) reveals that state mandates range from seemingly no-cost instructional ideas (e.g., "teach/reteach") to the more expensive (61 new facilities). They also involve the addition of:

• equipment (e.g., 300 satellite downlink sites, 18,000 computer work stations K-6),

• guidelines (e.g., safe schools, nutrition),

• grants and recognition programs (e.g., 31 National Blue Ribbon Schools),

• staff development opportunities (e.g., Principals' Academy),

• networks, centers and partnerships (e.g., school-business partners),

• governance structures (e.g. faculty senates, local school improvement councils),

• accountability measures (e.g., accreditation, school report cards, testing, warranty).

Achievement testing has been a major vehicle to promote local accountability. When the state used the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), third and sixth graders showed the most progress, increasing four percentile points from 1995. "Ninth and eleventh graders increased scores in at least seven of the 14 performance areas..." (WVDE, 1995-96, p. 20). Students score above the national mean on the SAT, and score above both the

national and regional averages on the National Assessment of Education Progress in reading (ranking 19 out of 39 states).

According to a West Virginia Education Fund study of achievement of the years 1991 through 1995, there was still financial disparity among the counties.

> Over the past six years, school enrollment decreased, the number of professional personnel declined and the level of service personnel dropped; however, overall funding for education increased by approximately 17 percent and the number of counties experiencing deficits climbed from five to 16 (Margolin, 1996, p. 16).

Three factors related to deficits are: unfunded excess levies, sparse student population, and overall financial management. While per pupil expenditures increased by 37 percent during this period, it ranged from a high of $6,348 to a low of $4,421 (state average of $5,191 in 1995). Despite the disparity, however, there was no relationship between amount of money spent per county and achievement on CTBS tests, according to a state study (Margolin, 1997). And ironically, the state's funding formula that distributes money to the state's 55 county school systems was judged to be among the most equitable of the states (Viadero, 1998). This finding mirrors national studies as well:

> More than a quarter-century after the first battles over the equity and adequacy of state school finance systems, solutions are as elusive as ever...The problems is easy enough to establish. But exhaustive attempts to do something about the inequities have failed to bring about real and lasting reform (White, 1997, pp. 1,32).

Another vehicle to promote school reform has been state accreditation. Accreditation (first county, then school) began in the early 1980s and included high quality, and prescriptive standards, that focused on resources and inputs, and on "periodic, random and unannounced" on-site visits to the schools by teams of state department staff, practitioners, and citizens. In the late 1980s the standards shifted from resources to outcomes and incrementally expanded each succeeding year (Marockie, 1997).

Effective July 1, 1997, each school must meet 98 quality indicators in the areas of: "curriculum; workplace process/workplace; finance; transportation; special education services, alternative education, and other programs; facilities; administrative practices and school community relations; training county board members and administrators; personnel qualifications; professional development and evaluation; student and school performance; and safe and disciplined schools" (WVSB Policy 2320 §126-13-5). Indicators of effectiveness include:

> student performance as measured by a uniform statewide assessment program; school attendance rate, student dropout rate, graduation rate; average class size;

> pupil-teacher ratio...number of split-grade classrooms; percent of graduates who enrolled in college....pupil-administrator ratio; parent involvement; parent, teacher, and student satisfaction; operating expenditure per pupil; and percent of graduates who attain the minimum level of performance in the basic skills recognized by the State Board and the grade level distribution in which the minimum level of performance was met [WVSB Policy 2320 §126-13-2 (2.1)].

Examples of accreditation indicators are:

> The level of parent involvement shows an increasing trend during the most recent three (3) years or is at or above sixty percent (60%), (4.10)

and

> An instructional day is provided that includes a minimum of 315 minutes for kindergarten and grades 1-4, 330 minutes for grades 5-8, and 345 minutes for grades 9-12. The county board submits a school calendar with a minimum 180 instructional days (5.1.21).

"Initially, counties that were reviewed [had] an average of 13 indicators out of compliance in 1983-84, 14.4 in 1984-85, and 1.5 per county in 1985-86" (Hazi, 1994, p. 7). County approval status fluctuated each year from 1993-1997, ranging from its current low of 16% counties in approval to a high of 55% (Marockie, 1997). According to the most recent accreditation report, 9 (16%) counties have full approval, 14 (25%) counties have conditional approval, and the remaining 32 (58%) counties have probationary approval. A county receives conditional approval if at least 95% of the standards are met and at least 90% of their schools have full approval. A county receives probationary approval if the county has met fewer than 95% of the standards and has 11% or more or their schools judged to be probationary or seriously impaired (Marockie, 1997). The indicator that placed most schools (187) out of compliance in December 1997 was 4.1:

> A minimum of 50% of the school's students in grades 3-11 perform at or above the 3rd quartile in total basic skills; and no more than 15% of the students perform within the 1st quartile, or the percentage of students performing within the 1st quartile is decreased based on two of the most recent 3 years. [WVSB Policy 2320 §126-13-4 (4.1)]

Many administrators were upset in 1997 because they were held accountable for scores in the year that the test changed from the CTBS to the Stanford 9 Test of Basic Skills (SAT-9).

Respondents: A Profile

As described in Appendix A, this research was qualitative in design and was conducted in two phases. In the first phase a survey was mailed to at least one central office

supervisor in each of the counties in the Fall of 1997. The following is a profile of the 47 supervisors who responded to the mailed survey. These central office supervisors:

- are long-time residents in the county in which they work,
- have a job title other than "supervisor,"
- are likely to have been a teacher and began their varied administrative career history in the 1970s that included Principal/Assistant Principal or General or Special Supervisor and Coordinator/director of a program such as Title I,
- are members of ASCD and one other state or national professional association and subscribe to Educational Leadership and Education Week,
- are skilled in communications, grant writing, and knowledge of national trends and specialized information,
- feel "very knowledgeable" about state school reform issues, but only "somewhat" knowledgeable about national school reform issues. They receive state reform information from state department sponsored meetings/workshops, and national reform information from readings and the state department.
- only a few report that their administrative job had been jeopardized in the last 10 years due to a decrease in enrollment or funds, or a conflict with an individual, teachers' group, other administrators or school board.
- state and federal legislation, paperwork and funding have had the most impact on their current position.

Those 20 supervisors who volunteered to be interviewed during the Fall of 1997 and the Spring of 1998 follow this same profile with some exceptions (as reflected in Questions 2, 4 and 10 of the survey in Appendix A). Ten were male and ten were female. Males primarily held the current job title of Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent and tended to be in administration longer (16+ years), having begun their administrative career in the 1970s, than the females (under 15) who began their administrative career in the 1980s. Also a higher percentage (6 or one-third compared with one-fourth of the respondents) report that their jobs have been jeopardized within the past ten years.

Results of the Interviews

This section reports the themes of the interview phase of the research that are grouped within three sections: 1) rural, 2) school reform, and 3) central office supervision. While themes (both major and minor) are interrelated, they and their illustrative quotes are grouped within a section to best tell the story of the role of the central office supervisor in rural school reform.

Rural Themes

A rural lens is noticeably absent from the thinking of most central office supervisors interviewed. A rural lens is absent from how they think of their role, school reform, and their job challenges. When asked if and how ruralness affected school reform, this was one of the few times during the interview that supervisors seemed hesitant in their response.

Each held differing -- but often negative -- conceptions of "rural." Their implicit definitions included: economic or "poverty" (#13), political or "powerlessness and without voice" (#16), "parochialism," or a narrow or limited view (#6), "resistance to change"(#12), "the absence of things such as art, services (#7), and negative stereotypes of the hillbilly portrayed in the movie Deliverance (#12). Sometimes "rural" was referred to as a negative, detrimental condition that existed some place else:

> "In ____County, ruralness is a problem there. There's no tax base there....and special problems of transportation, location of schools, number of students. In the rural setting people are more inclined to say 'leave us alone.' Expects resistance to change"(#9), and
> "They" [the rural counties] control the state;... a detriment to alot of sound decision making (#1).

In fact, there seems to be an aversion to using the term "rural" in the second most rural state. For example, there are designations: 1) within the state for those counties that are "more vs. less rural," 2) within counties for those schools that are "more vs. less rural," and 3) for those students that are more vs. less rural ("hicks" and "scurves" vs. "townies").

During the conduct of the study, a state legislator initiated House Bill 4062 to make it easier for motorists to pick up road kill, since it is illegal to be in possession of game out of season. The ensuing responses on National Public Radio focussed on how this would negatively affect West Virginia's national image and how it would be the object of Jay Leno and other talk show jokes (NPR, Morning Edition, 2/4/97). This is an example of how the state's ruralness has been used to disempower its residents.

While we were momentarily in the national spotlight, one editorial put it into perspective by citing stereotypes from other states and countries:

> We like to think we invented every backward, backwoods illness and image that exists. No one has a monopoly on negative images and eyesores...Allowing motorists to keep their road kill as long as they report it within 12 hours...sounds pretty tame ("Do we care what others think? 1998, p. 2D).

Filmmaker John Nakashima believes that the negative image of West Virginia in the media and to most non-Appalachians is due to not enough Appalachians producing books and films to project a different reality (Burnside, 1995). He describes two images that

sometimes become intertwined: the hillbilly, a negative image of the toothless, stupid rube; and the mountaineer, a positive image of the frontiersman such as Daniel Boone. Historian John Alexander Williams of Appalachian State University identified that the positive mountaineer image became conveniently replaced after the Civil War around the time of the Hatfield-McCoy feud with the hillbilly image to give coal companies an excuse to deprive Appalachians of their land. Williams further claims that if we embrace the word and image -- instead of running away from it -- it can be used as a source of power (Burnside, 1995).

When I began to question the absence of a rural lens in the thinking of these supervisors, the following observations were confirmed. One supervisor, studying rural issues, concurred that few practitioners discussed rural issues: "If we don't think of ruralness, we're not different, we blend in" (#10). In explaining why they don't read about ruralness, another said, "I've lived it." One transplant from another state explained their reading on rural culture as "a matter of survival" (#11).

Several factors mitigate against thinking about rural. Due to such factors as the in-migration of metropolitans, proximity to a city, the predisposition to drive two hours for food as well as recreation, and access to "metro" ideas, technology and products (e.g., metropolitan newspapers, broadcasts, the Internet, and nationally named products and services), the physical signs of ruralness (and geographic isolation) diminish. Most supervisors confirmed this point of view.

While reminders of geographic isolation diminish, however, rural cultural issues still flair when faced with community resistance to school consolidation and failure to vote for excess levies and school bonds. Seal and Harmon (1995), two state residents and rural school advocates, best describe the current culture's attitude toward education and reform in a mythology of school's "glory days," that can be summarized as follows:

- Most parents believe in school's "glory days" where their education "was superb" and that their children should enjoy the same experience. "They want the past improved or added to, but not changed altogether. They prefer that their children atttend the same schools they did, have the same teachers and enjoy the same success they feel they have achieved" (p. 122). They also want them to have a winning football team or a shorter bus ride (Green, 1997).
- Most parents believe that their children can best be prepared in small, isolated, strict and orderly, protected schools that concentrate on fundamental teachings to include prayer (e.g., see Blackford, 1997; "Football prayer, it's unconsitutional," 1997; Perella, 1997).
- They "are quick to blame outsiders for trying to bring urban America's problems to rural areas in the form of landfills...or prisons...and who promise that rural folks can be more or have more if they will embrace the opportunities for change..." (p. 122).

• They similarly resent the state and federal governments telling them what to do with unfunded mandates, no matter how well-intentioned, because they undermine local control and independence.

• While they see a need for education, they think in terms of jobs, not careers, and associate college education and careers "with anti-union folks who are responsible for the trend in which well-paying jobs with benefits have been replaced by much lower-paying service jobs with fewer or no benefits" (p. 123).

School Reform Themes

Curriculum decision making (and ultimately school reform) within West Virginia has been characterized as highly centralized and state controlled (Pipho, 1991). One supervisor aptly characterized the state's three eras of school reform: 1) School Effectiveness, 2) Empowerment, and 3) Data Obsession (#13). The first era began in the early 1980s on the heals of the Recht Decision and the school effectiveness movement. The initiative that embodied this era was the Principals' Academy which targeted inservice principals with much needed techniques for analyzing test scores and common sense principles of working with students and teachers. These were the days when reform was done on faith that something would happen.

The Era of Empowerment followed in the late 1980s on the heals of the recommendations of the Carnegie (1986) report that called for restructuring and more site-based management and teacher involvement in decision making. This era also followed a flurry of state reform activity that showed a limited effect on student achievement. Faculty Senates, Local School Improvement Councils, and Curriculum Teams embody this era.

The Era of Data Obsession, the current era, began with the introduction of the West Virginia Education Information System (WVEIS), a computerized data management system required in 1990 to connect all counties to the WVDE. This was then followed with the introduction of warranties for its high school graduates [WVSB Policy 2320 §126-13-5(5.6.23)] and using achievement test scores as a basis for rating counties [WVSB Policy 2320 §126-13-4(4.1)]

The supervisor added that each era was interspersed with pseudo-reforms, i.e. those "reform[s] without substance, paper policies without resources and direction, destined to wither and fail before they ever got started" (#13). Examples of pseudo-reforms include waivers and the electronic portfolio [WVSB Policy 2320 §126-13-5(5.6.21)].

Supervisors reported a variety of local reform successes, depending on such factors as the supervisor's primary job responsibilities, expertise, interests, and the county's

progress. Successes were categorized using Elmore and Sykes (1992) four types of policy instruments: mandates, inducements, capacity building, and systemic change. Mandates are "rules governing the action of individuals and agencies that are intended to produce compliance" (p. 191). Inducements are transfers of money in return for certain immediate action. Capacity building is the investment of money in staff development to produce results over time. Systemic changes are the transfers of authority, such as the call for site-based management.

•The most frequently cited success was in capacity building, staff development. Because rural schools are limited in their capacity to send practitioners to training outside of their counties and to national conferences, most staff development was delivered internally with the central office supervisor (or teacher) learning the information and providing inservice. One supervisor, networking with other supervisors, sent teachers to nearby county workshops within the region. Staff development can often be a "reform hole" and barrier to implementation, especially for rural districts (Hertert, 1996). However, in this study, supervisors were most pleased with their local staff development efforts. As will be discussed in the themes of central office supervision, staff development was often bolstered with grant funds.

• Supervisors are reactive and selectively assertive in their stance towards reform. According to Hertert (1996), schools can be assertive, insulated or reactive in their stance toward school reform. Being assertive is "to have access to state policy leaders, and is usually influential in state policy development" (p.383). It is difficult for supervisors in a rural state with limited resources to be assertive toward state mandated reform. Instead, most supervisors were "reactive," i.e. who saw "state policies as having a significant impact on their daily operations and priorities" and who had limited resources "to either influence state policies or to insulate themselves from their effects" (Hertert, 1996, p. 384). Supervisors reported having to find resources just to keep up with state mandates.

But supervisors were also selectively assertive toward reform, moving beyond compliance in some areas, depending on such factors as when they are monitored by the state, what extra resources (people, funds, time, materials) they can obtain, their history of success with a program, and if the initiative is doable, relevant, and good for kids. For example, supervisors were working on non-mandated programs such as block scheduling, community wellness, curriculum integration, early intervention, dropouts, kindergarten orientation, senior projects/exhibits, and summer camps (e.g., #5, 8, 10, 12, 15, 18). Thus, adding to Hertert's work "selectively assertive" is another reform stance, where schools elect and initiate special programs, often with additional funds, based on local needs. Perhaps

such activity is one of the few ways that school systems can maintain the appearance of local control in a highly centralized state with prescriptive and comprehensive mandates.

• While no one openly criticized the WVDE or state mandates, supervisors liked some mandates more than others, depending on "local fit." For example, supervisors had varied responses to Senate Bill 300 School to Work, a more recent state initiative. Many liked the computer technology initiative that has made West Virginia a state leader (Zehr, 1997). One supervisor (#1) opposed many state mandates including School to Work, a law designed to emphasize career clusters and majors for students in Grades 8-12, while others thought it was the best thing that had happened to the state in a long time (#7). One county, with access to staff development prior to the bill, was very excited about it (#17). A supervisor in a more assertive county winked at the mention of School to Work and said that they were not rushing ahead on this initiative, having just put in place one they liked. They were carefully looking for the flexibility in state policy and would translate what they were doing locally into the language that the state wanted (#18). One supervisor explained why "local fit" was important:

> There are so many mandates, that counties tend to pick and choose those that they will do at the minimum level, just to meet the requirement of the law and those that they really want to push that fit the needs of the county and the philosophy or needs of the superintendent and the board....When you go to meetings..., there's a general consensus that it will be impossible to meet the intent of some law or policy. Sometimes they [WVDE] get it wrong; for example, SB 300 electronic portfolios. Over the years there's been lots of good ideas and which there's either no funding or a way to see it through to conclusion....

(S)he continued to explain why the county liked some initiatives more than others:

> We're in agreement with School to Work....and the [computer] technology initiative. [It's] related to where the county is evolving. When it is clear to the community that the reform is going to bring about real positive changes for their children and their schools and they can see that, then its going to happen (#7).

Thus, supervisors are mindful of "local fit," i.e., local interpretation of state mandates to insure 'fit' with local philosophy, needs, and desired change. Such examples confirm Hertert's (1996) finding that local needs have to be compatible with state mandates for reform to be successful. She further observed that local fit was most often an issue for rural districts who were reactive to reform. The next theme, "windows of opportunity," partly explains "local fit."

• Change in rural schools occurs through "windows of opportunity" calibrated to school board elections, grant funding cycles, and/or change of superintendents. One supervisor introduced the idea of a "window of opportunity" and board elections by saying:

> If board members... want to continue as board members, they are very, very sensitive to bringing about big changes. They're very nervous because of the next board election... They can either make good decisions, because they are concerned that they might get voted out or bad decisions because they're afraid they're going to be voted out....They're so concerned about the re-election process. Not much reform goes on in an election. Some, but at a slower pace, because they have that greater concern. [There's a] two year window of opportunity for local change cycles with election years...every 2 years there's some chance of blockage. That one off year is when things move better and faster....That limits the amount of change...because it takes more than 2 years to implement change (#7).

Another supervisor attributed local change to grant funding:

> There are no extra funds to pick up these extra programs. That has as much to do with change as anything else. There's very little of that program endurance. Even if an administrator believes in something, it's really hard to get the funding for the program. Change is very fragmented as you are able to scrape together funds to move it forward. I've never seen anything other than top down (#10).

One attributed local change to change in superintendents (which has averaged 2.5 years in state):

> [We] played at the Recht Decision from ___ to___ but started reform efforts in 19__ because of change in the superintendent's leadership, whose supportive philosophy is '___, here's your job, just do it; [s]he doesn't interfere, [s]he just asks 'keep me informed.'...[S]he asked] if we could change the schools in the next 5 years, what would we do...Then a committee of 50 in 12 hours of meetings, then many other hours with teachers and principals for a mission and vision statement (#8).

Still another identified how all three affect local change:

> ...if you have money available, it's far easier for staff development and [to] get teachers released from class [to] do visiting, participate in traditional training events and participate in planning or compensated for planning. A lot of those initiatives with grant money tied to them have not been long enough for the real change to occur. Board elections can have an influence, if there are major changes on the board and a lot of positions are open and filled, but grant money is the bigger influence. Also how often the superintendent has changed because some are more aggressive about making sure that counties are applying for money than other superintendents..... we've been stable for a long time... We have a board election with three seats open... I don't know that it will affect curriculum or school reform issues as much. But where we're wondering, will it affect a bond for buildings and remodeling? (#11)

Then, "windows of opportunity," are limited opportunities for both mandated and non-mandated change in rural schools, dependent upon such factors as school board elections, grant funding cycles, and/or change of superintendents.

A more assertive county was an exception. They had gotten into "a habit of continuous renewal." The supervisor here attributed their assertiveness due: to a relatively young group of teachers and principals who were trained in the school effectiveness principles in the early 1980s, to their continuous staff development, to paid curriculum development and alignment, and to constant reading of journals for new ideas. As they attended state meetings and saw "how ahead" they were of other counties--and how test scores confirmed this--they were even more motivated to stay ahead (#18).

• The challenges of rural school reform are many and varied. The most frequently cited reform challenge was the pressure of test scores. Other challenges included: maintaining high expectations, the community, and scarce resources, to name a few.

School accreditation and test score publicity put excessive pressure on personnel. Forty-six (46) of the state's 55 counties had at least one school (a total of 187 schools) with students scoring below the third quartile on the SAT-9, as found in Performance Indicator 4.1 (WVDE, 1997). The only supervisors who dismissed the pressure were those in the few counties that had state accreditation approval and thus, acceptable test scores. A supervisor in a county on probation put it this way:

> There is a subtle mechanism in the accreditation system. When they [test scores] drop, the county goes on a list for all sorts of interventions. In rural areas, they [the public] have a lot of trouble with a decision being based on a test score. [Question - Doesn't the superintendent set the tone?] That can be true as long as you're above the 50th percentile. The pressure comes from outside the entire county. If you're at the 50th or above, yea, we want to take the test scores and put them in a context and not get bent out of shape. I guarantee you that if you're below the 50th percentile, everyone's bent out of shape. You're forced to...You must write a statement of how you're addressing the deficiency and it goes down hill from there (#10).

Another described the pressure this way:

> [It's a] problem when you use scores to compare one county to another or cause accreditation teams to come into the county, or used as a way of punishing the county, students, or individual schools. This is what causes resentment. Pressure varies by the philosophy of the Board of Education and Superintendent. We're lucky that we have a Board and Superintendent that understand test scores (#7).

Teachers and administrators feel the pressure statewide (WVASA, 1997; WVEA, 1997). A few supervisors reported anomalies such as principals resigning (or retiring early)

due to test score (or reform) pressure and awarding winning schools with low test scores (#1, 5, 9, 13). "I've never heard so many complaints," said one (#15). Another reported that while jobs are not threatened, people will be subject to criticism, "Principals are running scared and thinking about running the pre-test again. It's costly in time and money. I'd rather have them spend the money on learning and teaching" (#6). One angry supervisor put it this way:

> There should be a 1:1 correlation with the test and the curriculum....I don't have a problem teaching to the test either....It's foolhardy to keep teachers in the dark about what they will be tested on...The problem is being obsessed with the scores and how they are used. It is ludicrous to expect an entire state to be above the 50th percentile...how they get away with that, I'll never understand....It's abusive the way these scores are being used....They might end up with two kids who don't get above the 50th percentile. They'll put them on probation and that destroys their morale and perpetuates the culture of poverty. That's what gives people such a low opinion of reforms (#13)

(S)he went on to say that during the 1997 testing, directions were incorrect on one section, an answer sheet didn't match in another, and the scores of 11 kids put them out of compliance.

• Supervisors are responding to test pressure "by providing materials, services, workshops,...test interpretation and analysis at the building level,...test taking skills, and ...supervisory services" (#6). One described a recent meeting held with fourth grade teachers:

> For the first time in my career, it's clear what is being tested...so it's not some secret formula.... What is important is to do no harm to students in our efforts to maintain test scores... We have to be very careful to not initiate any practice that is harmful to students... observe in classrooms... look for resources that will help them to teach...I don't visit just those classrooms to single them out... We talked about what was working well and not working...We went away with a plan of five things that they would do to work towards the test and then after the test....They hadn't had an opportunity to talk together... I could see they were taking ideas from each other (#10).

Even with supervisory support, principals are those most currently vulnerable of all public school personnel to test score pressure. They are required to attend a five day, summer Principals' Academy when their school scores fall below the required percentile---even when they transfer into a deficient school for which they've not been responsible (Michael, 1997). One former principal saw it this way, "[it's] an incredible and unfair demand placed on principals. What can we do? The rules have been determined and we must comply....[This is] the name of the game..."(#16).

There appears to be little relief from this pressure in the immediate future because of a recommendation of the recent Commission on Educational Quality and Equity (1998). The

Commission, charged by Executive Order No. 7-97 and Judge Robinson in Tomblin v. Gainer, the second generation of the Recht Decision, to review the status of the state's implementation of the Master Plan for improving the schools. The Commission recommended elevating the status of test scores. Specifically, it recommended that a school could be considered seriously impaired if test scores alone at one or more grade levels fell below the 30th percentile in the most recent year and in one of the two preceding years.

An interesting and related aside: The state fell in its national ranking in the second Quality Counts '98 report conducted by Education Week and sponsored by the Pew Charitable Trusts. One of the reasons why the state fell from an A to a B+ in the category of "Standards and Assessment" was for replacing its criterion-referenced test with the SAT-9, a norm-referenced test (Viadero, 1998).

• High expectations. In this minor theme, supervisors spoke of the challenge of having high expectations for teachers (with teacher morale) and for students.

Maintaining the reform momentum with teachers is a challenge. Teacher response to school reform is as varied as it was in Hazi's (1989) study. One supervisor reported that (s)he saw:

> ...a whole continuum, everything from stress...'I can't do this, this is not what I teach' to 'This is exciting, I get to do some new things, this focuses me'...The majority are somewhere in between. They're feeling some stress, particularly when it comes to the SAT-9 scores. But I do think there is some enthusiasm towards some of the reforms in general. What I've heard teachers say is that we haven't had enough time. We need more time to do this well. And the pervasive thing is ...time. (#11)

Morale is a problem in some counties, especially where excess levies and bonds fail. Teacher absences, work to the rule, and resistance to change are challenges some supervisors face. "We run out of subs[titute teachers] on Mondays and Fridays" reported some (#6, 9, 10). Resistance to change was not always a veteran teacher problem, "since some of our older are the more enthusiastic" (#6). Morale is even a problem for supervisors where forced compliance results in hostility and resentment (e.g., #14).

Making change positive is a challenge:

> Change is misinterpreted that there is something wrong with what we're doing instead of trying to make something better. You always have to couch what you have to say. We don't feel comfortable in saying 'this isn't working.'....Few teachers want to change after the staff development... We don't want to change, but we tinker with the small stuff (#6).

Supervisors face this attitude as they work one-on-one and in groups with teachers. One supervisor told a story about a teacher who came to the office complaining about her terrible day. The supervisor quickly turned the problem back to her: "You select the content. You decide the methods. Why are you having a terrible day?"(#8) In explaining reform from the teacher's point of view, one explained:

> They respond to things they feel a need for [The Responsible Student program is given as a positive example]. You get a little tired of reform when it happens so quickly....They got to a point ten years ago, if the legislature sent something out, you jumped right on it ..Now it seems it comes twice as fast....you get overwhelmed. [They think] if they ignore it, it will go away. So you find yourself going back and going over it with them again (#12).

In an earlier study, Hazi (1989) found that West Virginia teachers were angry about reform. They largely viewed it as a paper exercise and judged progress by material things such as low salaries, benefits, and classroom materials, since they had limited information about reform.

Supervisors also spoke of teachers not having high expectations for students, especially for those second generation at-risk of dropping out:

> ...everyone should have high expectations. This is one issue that is difficult. Many don't understand what's meant by high expectations. These students came from this home or that family and they're lucky they get three meals a day...and on and on... They think that [if] they come from a home that is split, they can't do better. Some times we have to stand in the place of the parents. [It's] a long term process to change that kind of attitude...(#7).

Another succinctly echoed the problem of high expectations:

> Many teachers are life-long residents of the area. To keep things the same. .certain people will be successful and others won't ...and stereotype the at-risk. [They] find it very difficult to work with a child who is second or third generation welfare and families who never make any effort to rise above that and they write them off (#10).

Yet another observed the problem of the low expectations that students, especially rural girls, have for themselves:

> A phenomenon I found interesting is when you have these intelligent girls graduate from high school and will not go on to college. They end up finding a boy around here and getting married and then they want to work at a fast food and soon find out that's not going to get them anywhere.. In an effort to get our college going rate up, ..counselors make sure every senior is signed up for some college class or some post-high school institution.....They do what they can...[but we] still have these kids.....I've wondered whether this is some rural expectation at work there (#12).

When asked how to change these expectations, (s)he responded by saying that you take them out of the county:

> Getting them out of here and exposing them to activities outside the county.. and seeing there's a whole world out there. Sometimes you'll find you're working against a hand full of parents who feel threatened by that and just don't want their kids to leave. And they find them a little house around where they live... (#12).

Rural school curriculum -- an "export curriculum" -- is designed to help students leave their community for employment elsewhere. (S)he also observed:

> People will be satisfied with a lower paying job to stay here. We have kids who are graduating from college that will come back here to work in jobs that are not what they went to college to get a professional degree in and make half the salary just to get to stay here....adults who will just be satisfied... with less to keep them from taking on a middle class life style and middle class pressures and middle class expectations. They might like the middle class salary and money, but not at the expense of a busier and more stressful lifestyle...(#12).

• The community. Since the state has a graying population, and the majority (84%) do not have school-age children, it is a challenge for schools to meaningfully relate to their rural communities. The more rural counties frequently run in deficit or "in the red," when their citizens fail to pass local excess levies. Counties operating in the black, however, cannot depend on citizens to pass levies, even when they have historically done so. Some times citizen votes are backlashes to: increased teacher salaries or benefits, lack of confidence in superintendent or board leadership, or poor communications. In this minor theme, supervisors spoke of challenges related to public distrust and the need to keep progress visible to the public.

One supervisor in a county in the red called his community a "hot bed of mistrust of state and federal control" (#16). While few supervisors were not residents of the county, being an "outsider" sometimes affected success and how some were received by the community. Within some counties, insider-outsider could be a designation within a county. For example, one could be a resident of another section of the county, and still be considered an outsider to another faction (#17). One supervisor who studied rural issues put it this way:

> Effective change is so dependent on personality and communication, public relations skills. People wind up responding to the person rather than the idea....There will always be that element. It is a rural issue in some ways because 'we who live here know best how to run things here. I'll not criticize you, if you don't criticize me and we'll just keep things pretty much as they are and when mandates come down from above we'll pay them lip service, but we're not going to do them.' And it often takes an

> outsider who doesn't have those political and personal alliances that have gone on for years to break that cycle (#10).

Still, some supervisors believe that if they make their schools accessible to the community after hours, they're involving the community in the schools (#12). This finding was consistent with Schmuck and Schmuck (1993) who found that:

> [d]espite the fact that the students provide entertainment for the community and the building is open for community use, we saw very few instances of school superintendents or principals engaging the community in any way. While the school is the center of the community, the community members are estranged from the curriculum....they eschew citizen involvement and participation, creating a professional distance that separates life in school from life in the community (Smuck & Schmuck, 1993, p. 229).

Another admitted: "We'd gotten complacent, thinking it was our school. It's not our school, it's a public school. That's forced us to find out what they [the public] think" (#9). Some communities want to be more involved in curriculum decision making. For example, block scheduling has been in the news because a citizen faction in one county opposes it. Ward (1994) explains this and actions such as book-banning and demands for prayer at school functions as how rural communities attempt to resist change in culture.

Meaningful community involvement is a challenge in rural areas. One supervisor talked about a student-community project that provides an example of how to think about community connections. (S)he talked about elementary students helping the city council build a new building by investigating material cost and making a Power Point presentation with a scale model at a council meeting (#8). While most rural school curriculum helps students leave, this is an example of a "community-building curriculum," where the community becomes a focus of study for students, helping them to develop a sense of pride, place and belonging (e.g., Foxfire) and where schools can become incubators of economic development for the community (Natchigal, 1994).

It is a challenge for supervisors to find ways to make the schools' progress visible to the community. Incrementally, paced change may be ideal for schools to allow for appropriate staff development and implementation. When change is incremental, however, it may be less visible and difficult to translate to the public. New buildings are visible, tangible changes, but change in curriculum is less tangible.

> You need the big splashes to keep it in the eye of the community and constantly looking towards neat stuff out of the ordinary. And I don't know how to do that. The senior projects will be one thing to keep us going. People like to see their kids doing

> well, as long as we keep doing that we'll be o.k...Students are the best spokespersons for progress.(#8)

Another echoed these sentiments:

> [You have to]..involve parents in the process, doing a job in PR so that they can understand how what we do benefits kids. If parents aren't involved, you might not be able to accomplish it ...The public in general is well-educated and think these things through and understand that the change will advance the students....Our public is better able to make discerning decisions (#9).

This supervisor described how a student award presentation at a board of education meeting diffused a potential problem. The marketing of education reform is "not only important to implementing change but to garnering the political anπd public support often critical to initiating and/or sustaining the change process (Hertert, 1996, p. 390).

• Scarce Resources. Cole (1988) characterized rural schools as "the forgotten schools of the education reform movement in America" (p. 140). While this study shows that they are not forgotten, they are "feeling the squeeze of the higher costs that attend higher standards" (p. 141). In this minor theme, supervisors spoke of scarce resources (finances and time) as challenges to reform. They complained of unfunded mandates. They spoke of local competition for scarce funds, such as the over-emphasis on athletics and the constant pressure to invest academic funds in extracurricular activities (#8).

A few supervisors, especially in counties with deficits, spoke of how further consolidation would be inevitable to deal with the budget and state mandates (#16, #15). And while "little schools were dynamite," and "getting a lot of things done," they would not last (#15). The rural school is

> a centering point of the community.... the physical center for people to gather for athletic events, musical offerings, and theater, as well as for meetings and events... The school is often the only place large enough to hold community meetings. The school, more than the church and the tavern... captures the essence of the community (Smuck & Schmuck, 1993, p. 212).

"When the school goes, the community dies" is a popular refrain among the community and educators (Schmuck & Scmuck, 1993, p. 217).

Transportation and students riding the bus for two hours a day can be major problems. One supervisor explained how these students rarely participate in extracurricular activities and may likely be home-schooled (or attend alternative schools such as a Christian academy), a growing phenomenon and lost revenue (#8). In some rural counties, for example, a county school bus can travel 357,279 miles per year at the average cost of $618

dollars per pupil (with a low of $341 to a high of $720 dollars). Counties can vary with 1.6 students per square mile in the most rural (Pocahontas) to 58.1 per square mile in one of the smallest counties (Ohio), to 34.64 students in the most metropolitan (Kanawha). A county can spend 10.5 percent of $1.1 million dollars on school transportation (Hodel, 1998). A bill to provide extra funding for rural school transportation is under review during the 1998 legislative session.

Time was another scarce resource. The following echoes the sentiment of supervisors in this study: "[T]ime [w]as a critical component in making significant changes in educational practices, and many complained that the state did not provide sufficient time to fully explore, plan and evaluate the required changes" (Hertert, 1996, p. 391). Since staff development was one of their reform tools, they commented often that three days of staff development was not enough time (#15).

> Staff development has played an important part...If we have the money and the time to train them, then it works. If we're given time lines and there is not the money or time, then it's not going to work (#7).

A supervisor also noted howthe much needed staff development infringed on instructional time (#15).

• Supervisors (and their systems) need a breather in the pace of reform. Many supervisors are weary and "need a breather" to implement mandates already in place. This echoes Hertert (1996) who found educators critical of reform's rapid pace. The following sentiment was typical:

> Let us get caught up before you start the next round. We have resisted to some degree...now we're into it big time. People feel the need to get through what they're required to do and have the opportunity to stretch beyond that with grants...We need a breather before we push this further. ..There's an understanding that some of this will be pretty good, that will be very positive (#9).

Many supervisors have been forward thinking, making anticipated changes a year or so before mandated. For example, one said:

> ...We don't worry about test results....everyone in the state was worried last spring because it was a new test... so were we..... But that's the state of the state now. So everyone's given up that war. And we've always tested at every grade level.. So when the state switched over to testing at every grade level, we sat back and said hah, hah, hah, you're the one's that should be nervous. We're used to that. As a matter of fact, our principals asked whether the State would score the entire battery for grades in 1 and 2 (#12).

With the 1997 changes in accreditation indicators, a few supervisors will no longer stay "one step ahead" of initiatives (#15, #16, #17). While accreditation has been a "good thing" and "why we have the quality that we do," "with one stroke of the pen, we were out of compliance" (#15). (S)he continued: "When the state said it was coming, I would do it. But now, I won't....until it's required...."(#15).

One supervisor put it this way:

> When the legislature meets every year and they will legislate any number of reforms that will require you to do this, this, and this. Just about the time you learn what they want and figure out the best process for doing it, they initiate a new set. So you're rushing from one year to the next. It's starting the process over again. It's tough some years. They need to give us time to initiate some of their ideas (#7)

• The future of school reform holds challenges as well as opportunities. Many supervisors are optimistic of the future, yet realistic:

> I think West Virginia is on the right track. All of these reforms ..some have failed miserably, some have been bad ideas. Its like a shotgun effect, some have hit the mark and moved the state forward. The state is better than it was ten years ago...and it is moving forward. Sometimes it's a matter of perception. The state department likes to talk about how good we are...some of those are made to look better artificially...in some cases there is genuine improvement (#7).

Yet there's concern:

> [I'm] concerned that there will be new state leadership...I don't want to start in a new direction because we may have to stop and go in another direction and I won't have time to finish it. We have some good things going, but we have to overcome our money problems. I'm optimistic, but cautious. We've made good strides, but it could fall apart very quickly if we're not vigilant. (#8)

Many are concerened about personnel shortages. Even now, some counties are "preying on administrators," trying to steal the good ones from home counties (#12). A few supervisors are refusing to retire (e.g., #15, 18). A supervisor in an assertive county wondered whether (s)he would be able to maintain their stance toward reform with approaching retirements.

In the next ten years, there will be a mass exodus of teachers and administrators due to retirements. It will be difficult to recruit teachers for rural schools where the teacher is "the curriculum" (Sher, 1983b). They will be required to have multiple certifications and be willing to work for lower salaries (Cole, 1988; Helge & Marrs, 1981). Rural schools are not used to recruiting a work force, since the majority of teachers are natives, who attended a nearby college and stayed to teach (Cole, 1988). Rural schools may have to "grow their own" as well

as recruit "transplants" (Sher, 1983b) with "lifestyles, interests and attitudes consistent with local cultural norms [to] lessen the likelihood of staff becoming dissatisfied and unsuccessful" (Helge & Marrs, 1981, p. 6). We will have to market the benefits of a teaching career our school age population, and the rural advantage (e.g., friendliness, community spirit, recreation) to transplants.

Central Office Supervisor Themes

Limited research has been done on the role of central office supervisors in general (e.g., Blumberg, 1984; Donmoyer & Neff, 1983; Harris, 1967; Pajak, 1989; Speiker, 1976; Sullivan, 1982; Tracy, 1993, 1996) and their role in policy implementation in school reform in particular (Spillane, 1996). Killian (1990), specifically looking at the role of supervision in small, rural schools, identified the importance of the teacher qualities of independence, resourcefulness, community and collegiality, and playing down adversity.

The central office supervisor is often the individual charged with maintaining and improving the overall quality of instruction (Pajak, 1989). A central office supervisor is defined as one who is responsible (in whole or in part) for: curriculum development, staff development, and/or classroom visitation. This definition is representative of the authors of three dozen popular supervision textbooks published in the past 60 years (Holland, 1994). Four themes dominated the interviews.

•Central office supervisors are visible, survivors of downsizing. This finding contradicts earlier research done by Pajak (1989) who found supervisors to be "invisible." He found supervisors to be physically and psychologically remote from schools, "closeted" in their centralized offices with paper work. Especially in smaller districts, say Pajak's supervisors, the paper work keeps them from visiting schools regularly. In contrast, supervisors in this study are quite visible perhaps because they work in rural schools that have few central office administrators.

A few supervisors reported that their jobs had been jeopardized in the past ten years, especially when the state's school funding formula decreased the number of professionals from 55 to 53.5 per 1000 students. One said:

> ...a lot of positions were cut in central office. I was able to stay. It's been tough. Every year we cut teachers. They say 'what about this central office person, do you really need them'?. Every time there are cuts in personnel, that's the natural order. They say you have to make cuts in central office. And have had to take on more responsibility. It's reached a level of absurdity.... They're expected to have the same reforms and paperwork that a larger district does. Sometimes it makes for frustration ... But, we survive (#7).

There's both good news and bad news in being a survivor. Some supervisors explained their survival on their special expertise that has placed them in strategic positions:

> The more knowledgeable you are, the better problem solver you are. That's what teachers or principals are looking for. If they have a problem, they want somebody with a solution. The more knowledgeable..., the more secure your position is. I do it for self-preservation. I try to be as knowledgeable as I can about everything I can. You make yourself a resource person at the county level. You want the superintendent to think 'I can't do without him or her...We need him' If they don't think that, then you're not going to be around for very long. It's my job to be as knowledgeable as I can, even if its not in my field, special education, Title I, testing....personnel .... Some times the way you learn is through mistakes...(#7).

Another explained their special expertise as follows:

> The [$500,000 dollars] would not have arrived if not for the grant writing. I communicate well with those in authority. I get excited and believe in what I'm doing. We all have to get better about sharing the vision with other people. (#8)

While these supervisors have survived, many are over-worked. For example, one reported working 80 hours a week, doing the work of 26 other people in another county, and pulling two all nighters once a week just to keep up with the demands of the job (#15). Some found ways to tactfully say "no" to some assignments and pay teachers with released time or extra-duty contracts to handle events or projects such as social studies fairs or technology initiatives (#15, 18).

•<u>Staff development and grant writing were the most frequently cited supervisory tools used</u>. According to Tracy (1996) supervisors tend to use staff development as a tool of change because it results in the least dissension and because they believe teachers to be appreciative of their efforts. And according to Hertert (1996), staff development appears to be a barrier to reform implementation in rural schools. Grants are more typical of urban areas:

> Many... districts... did not wait for state support but were instead actively developing alternative sources of support outside the public school system" grants and private sector aid seems to be more typical in urban areas (p.388).

In contrast to this study, supervisors reported staff development as a local success, often made possible by grants. While Cole's (1988) "make-do" mentality might describe teachers in rural schools, it does not describe central office supervisors who have to advance their schools' reform agendas. They used Title I funds, wrote grants, sent teachers to nearby counties, or just "found the money some where" for staff development (#18). One supervisor said it was important to provide released time during the school day because it "gets their

[teacher] time and attention as a signal that it's important" (#6). Another supervisor in an assertive county reported obtaining as much as $96,000 in grants over a number of years for teachers to visit schools out of county, attend national conferences and institutes and to bring in speakers (#8). This supervisor emphasized that when your staff development speakers write the textbooks "that impresses people" and "when you send them out of county, ... teachers can see for themselves that it's the right thing to do" (#8).

Supervisors in more assertive counties tended to use staff development and grant writing in combination with strategic planning, program pilot testing, test analysis, graduate classes, readings, and curriculum writing as tools (e.g., #8, 9, 18). "We purchase magazines by the tons. I just put it in their hands and they come to their own conclusions" (#8). Other tools included: test analysis, curriculum alignment, group meetings, observations, providing resources, and public relations.

• Curriculum development was cited the least by supervisors. According to Pajak (1989), supervisors typically use curriculum development as a tool for district-wide change. They structure teacher involvement through committees so that they might develop "ownership" of the change and then stand out of their way, rather than closely monitoring instruction in classrooms for compliance to prescribed mandates. Not so with rural supervisors in this study. This finding confirms earlier rural schools research which shows that that there are few in central offices charged with curriculum development (Schmuck & Schmuck, 1993).

This theme, the absence of curriculum development, was identified when one of the few supervisors talked about working with department coordinators and teachers on various projects (#14). State mandates have been largely generic, content-free [except the adoption of state Instructional Goals and Objectives (IGOs) to coincide with the new SAT 9 test]. Due to their increased responsibilities and the difficulty of maintaining a working knowledge of the various content areas (i.e. reading, math, etc.), supervisors have little time to do more than analyze test scores and provde materials for their teachers. And while schools have Curriculum Teams, according to one, they "may not be working appropriately" (#15).

One supervisor in an assertive county, who did speak about curriculum development, reported that (s)he maintained a working knowledge of content areas by going to conferences, becoming familiar with IGOs and appropriate national standards, and by sending teachers to workshops. The supervisor still maintained paid summer curriculum writing committees to coincide with the cycles of textbook adoption and that made decisions regarding content to add or subtract, depending upon test results. This same supervisor,

who's responsibilities were primarily curriculum and staff development, had successfully guarded her time from additional assignments that would take her away from this focus (#18).

Statewide, the number of subject supervisors has decreased in these decades of reform with the downsizing of administrators, with the 1990 changes in the state funding formula, and with the WVDE's 1985 elimination of subject area (i.e., Math, Reading) supervisory certification. Where the role was valued by superintendents, they were retained, sometimes at county expensive beyond what was in the funding formula. Some have also suggested subject specialists that could be shared on a regional basis (RESA V Board of Directors, 1989). The absence of curriculum development may be one unfortunate consequence of reform.

• School reform is central to supervisory role due to the centralization of policy making at the state level. Some supervisors referred to themselves as a "reform agent" (#15) and an "agent of the state" (#10). One put reform into the following perspective:

> Reform makes my role. They look to my role for guidance on how to implement [it]. We're expected to be up-to-date with the latest knowledge. I try to attend the meetings around the state to be well informed and bring that back to them. They expect the leadership from the central office(#7).

The job of a reform agent is "data collection, monitoring policy, and assessment and not as a [local] change agent" (#15). (S)he feels guilty to tell teachers that they have one more thing to implement (#15) said one supervisor, echoing a forecast made earlier by Hazi (1993).

A few supervisors noted that while they are agents of the state, they are often "out of the information loop," since much WVDE information goes directly to the schools. For example, sometimes the WVDE promises teachers released time for training, and supervisors have to dig up un-budgeted money at the last minute to pay for it (#14, #15).

• Site based management has consequences for supervisors. Site-based management for central office supervisors means moving instructional leadership and change to the school level, and trusting principals and teachers to make wise curriculum decisions. Wimpelberg (1987) observed that the school-effectiveness movement has created problems for supervisors:

> Most supervisors, however, appear to have lost their traditional role of 'innovator' to the school principal in the wake of school effectiveness research and have been able to exercise their traditional 'expert' authority in curricular matters less the last two decades because of an increase in teacher knowledge and skills (pp. 103-104).

This appears true for supervisors in this study.

As long as principals act as instructional leaders, cautioned supervisors, site based management can work --- but they don't have the time. Lack of time for instructional leadership is echoed by Perry and Perry (1994) who found that rural secondary principals lack time due to paper work, discipline, and directing athletics, the life blood of rural schools. Principals don't have time to be instructional leaders, reported one, especially with all the plans they have to write (for technology, inclusion, school unified plans), and the meetings they must attend (e.g., IEPs, Faculty Senate, Curriculum Team). "It's their livelihood and not their life" (#15). They also may be "too busy working on compliance and test scores to be instructional leaders" (#16). When they resist change, supervisors try to be persuasive, withhold resources, and as last resort tell them "it's your call and your accountability" (#15).

Site-based management also involves teachers in decision making vehicles such as Faculty Senates. At its worse, warned one supervisor, site-based management allows teachers to fight among themselves over scarce resources (e.g., how to spend $15 per teacher in Faculty Senates), instead of with Charleston (#15). "It's no wonder why they talk about pop machines, teachers' lounges and decorating things. They're not equipped to talk about change. They don't want to be in that role. They want to tell others what they want" (#10).

Yet another talked about site-based management as a "double-edged sword" for supervisors: while teachers and principals made decisions out in the schools on which programs or textbooks to adopt, central office supervisors were still held accountable for test scores (#12). As one reported, (s)he had to get used to writing a program and turning "it back to the people who would redefine and make it work for them...To allow people to take charge of something that was mine...even if it crashes" (#10). Sometimes teachers made curriculum decisions (e.g., because they get tired of materials) to the objection of supervisors and have to learn the hard way when a new reading series fails. One supervisor proudly noted how (s)he avoided such conflicts by training teachers to make decisions with test data (#18).

Conclusions

Central office supervisors are "agents of the state" responsible for implementing state mandates. Staff development is their major tool for advancing local change with staff development counted among their successes. With scarce resources in a rural state, supervisors depend on extra funds through grants to advance reform locally. They are generally "reactive" in their stance towards school reform, yet "selectively assertive" on those non-mandated programs they choose to adopt when they have "local fit." In those reactive

counties, change occurs through "windows of opportunity" that are calibrated to school board elections, grant funding cycles, and/or change in superintendents. The most frequently cited reform challenge was the pressure of test scores as manifested in the school accreditation process. High expectations, the community, and scarce resources (of money and time) are additional reform challenges.

A most interesting (and perhaps ironic) finding is the absence of a rural lens in the thinking of these central office supervisors and their negative concepts of "ruralness." While many factors mitigate against supervisors thinking of themselves as living in a rural state, their actions are within a rural context. In this rural context, they must face scarce resources (economic), they must help their counties to advance the state's reform agenda first, and their local agenda second (political), and they must do this within schools that are feeling the stresses and challenges of test score pressure, poor morale, and sometimes resistance to change --- all those things that they think of when they talk about ruralness!

While these supervisors have empowered themselves through their grant writing, perhaps further power might be gained by using a rural lens to think about such things as their reactive--assertive stances toward reform, and how to better involve their graying communities who have no children in the schools and who receive little or no direct benefits as a result of their tax dollars. As rural schools continue to "make progress" --- to downsize in personnel and buildings, add technology and programs as mandated (and locally elected), and seek alternative funds through grants --- they also run the risk of sending the message to tax payers that they <u>can</u> "do more with less" and do <u>not</u> need their votes for excess levies!

The state has sustained three eras of court-ordered reform through almost two decades of progress --- as well as distress. How do we manage the next two decades of reform? Supervisors were reactive, but also "selectively assertive" toward reform, moving beyond compliance, depending on such factors as when they were monitored by the state, what extra resources they could obtain, their history of success with a program, and if the initiative is doable, relevant, and good for kids. As they weary of reform and its challenges, it will be more difficult for them to be mindful of "local fit" and what is "good for kids." When a state is centralized in its policy making and in its control of schools, it must be sensitive to such factors as: "reform distresses," the tensions between state vs. local control, ideal vs. "doable" mandates, the pacing of reform, and the prescriptiveness of mandates. "When the state get's it wrong," said one supervisor, the state department needs to rethink temporarily unrealistic (and unfunded) mandates and rescind them (e.g., electronic portfolios).

What will be our next era of school reform? The state department and counties face the challenge of maintaining a self-renewing mix of hope, funding, and a sense of progress, yet movement toward worthy, yet possible goals. This challenge also resides within the context

of a rural state, a state of limited financial resources. Within our current Era of Data Obsession and test pressure, supervisors are appropriately responding by providing assurances, materials, services, workshops, test interpretation and analysis, test taking skills, and curriculum development. However, there is no insulation from a rigorous state accreditation process or the stigma of low test scores. The Commission on Educational Quality and Equity made recommendations not only to elevate the status of test scores, but also to establish independent school audits with the power to transfer or lay off teachers because of low-performing schools (Kabler, 1998). But supervisors are too few in number to be miracle workers and they're "doing the best they can, with what they've got." We are all called upon to provide our legislators and the public this same sense of hope, progress, and confidence to stay the course without adding paranoia to a state that is at-risk.

In the next ten years the state anticipates a personnel shortage. Schools, not used to recruitment, must add yet another burden to an already full plate. Such times require more alliances between public schools and higher education to imagine creative, yet workable solutions that begin at the preservice level and transcend the lines of inservice practice. The WVDE as well as these central office supervisors should be commended for their investments in staff development, since teachers are "the curriculum" in rural schools and our continued hope of progress. Higher education might consider team contributions to workshop series on topics such as curriculum development and site-based management to teachers as well as administrators. Staff development would be easy to neglect. But as one supervisor said, "change is one teacher at a time," and one school at a time.

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Appendix A

Research Design

This research was qualitative and included mailed surveys and interviews as its primary sources of data and methods. In the first round of data collection, mailed surveys provided demographic data that was used to identify supervisors to be interviewed. In the second round of data collection, selected central office supervisors were interviewed.

Sources of Data

The primary sources of data for this study were questionnaires from and interviews of selected central office supervisors of one mid-Atlantic, rural state. A central office supervisor is defined as one who is responsible (in whole or in part) for: curriculum development, staff development, and/or classroom visition. This definition is representative of the authors of three dozen popular supervision textbooks published in the past 60 years (Holland, 1994). Individuals were selected to participate based on four criteria:

1) whether they were named as a member of the central office staff,

2) with the job titles that included: Director of Instruction, Curriculum Specialist, or Assistant Superintendent as found in a state department of education directory,

3) affiliation with the state Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, a professional association commonly joined by central office supervisors, and

4) employed as an administrator for at least 10 years in the state.

At least one supervisor was selected from every school system to receive the survey.

Secondary sources of data include: interviews with selected officials from the state department of education or other state/county agencies for reform perspectives, and analyses of documents, reports, and newspaper articles with county/state information on school reform. This data is used to describe the context of school reform in the state and contributes to interpretation.

Procedure

A letter of invitation to participate in the study, a questionnaire, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope were mailed to 96 central office supervisors in the state in August of 1997. In addition to explaining the study and providing assurances of anonymity and voluntary participation, as required of human subjects approval of the institution, the letter also included an offer to those who agreed to be interviewed. The researcher provided a free service (of a workshop, feedback, or consultation on listed topics). After a telephone follow-up to the non-respondents, 47 (49%) central office supervisors returned the survey and, of these, 20 agreed to an interview.

The mailed questionnaire solicited demographic information such as: years of administrative and teaching experience, membership in professional associations, journals received, special expertise, and how they get information about national and state school

reform issues (Survey follows). Such demographic information was used to construct a profile of participants. This is reported in a section of the report.

Selected interviews were conducted using an interview protocol as recommended by Yin (1984) and Merriam (1988). The protocol (follows Survey) included preliminary questions that related to: successes, challenges, and attitudes toward school reform; tensions among groups, how their role has changed as a result of school reform; and perspectives on the future of school reform. Probing questions were asked to follow-up on promising leads about their experiences with school reform. All interviews were tape recorded and conducted from October 1997 through March of 1998 in their offices.

As is common in interpretive research, data is simultaneously collected and analyzed. After eight interviews were conducted, the researcher listened to and transcribed them to identify reoccurring and salient themes. Reoccurring themes were those repeated by the participant, while salient themes were those single incident, yet important themes. Quotes in the language of the participants were extracted which best illustrated the themes. The themes were related to the interview protocol and to the major areas of the study.

Commencing with the ninth interview, themes were presented to the participant for confirmation in addition to the questions. If the theme met with confirmation, it was continued. A theme was confirmed, for example, when the interviewee said, "Yes ...yes....oh yes..." (e.g. Interview #11) and added an example or extended the theme to include another facet. If the theme was embellished or extended, the theme was modified. For example, the "window of opportunity" for change example (introduced in Interview #7), was extended by grant funding (Interview #10) and superintendent longevity (Interview #11). Only those most exemplary quotes were chosen to illustrate each theme for the research report.

The researcher also theorized about the study's major concepts through concept mapping around the thirteenth interview. While listening to and transcribing interviews, I maintained a piece of paper with concepts (and subconcepts) in boxes and drew lines to show their inter-relationships. Once a tentative map was formed, I combed through interview summaries to add flesh and missed details to the map. New (but often familiar) concepts (e.g. site-based management #11) were added to the map as they were repeated through the interviews. In addition to mapping, the researcher also wrote sections of the report.

As part of the research process, the results were written into a draft report and sent to those interviewed in the process of confirmation to corroborate findings as recommended by Magoon (1977). This process surfaces additions, corrections and reactions that become part of the final research report.

Respondent Profile

After a phone follow-up was made, one-half (47) of the central office supervisors responded to the survey and, of these, 20 agreed to participate in the interview. Responses to each question of the questionnaire were tabulated and appear in Appendix C. This section presents a narrative profile of those who responded to the questionnaire.

At least two central office supervisors completed the questionnaire from each of the eight regions (organized by RESA or Regional Educational Service Agency) of the state. More come from northern counties (32 of the state's 55) above the state capital. None responded from the southern most and deeply, rural counties. Most are long-term (21-41+ years) residents of the county within which they worked (Question # 1a, b, c).

Career History

Their current job titles vary and range from the lengthy "Supervisor of Curriculum, Staff Development, Textbooks and Personnel" to Superintendent, as has been typical of the role both historically (e.g., Spears, 1953) and in current times (e.g., Pajak, 1989). Only four had the word "supervisor" in their current job title. A few more frequently occurring titles include: Assistant Superintendent (10), Director of Title I (5), Director of Curriculum and Instruction (5), and Director of Special Education (3). Past job titles show a varied administrative career history which included most frequently Principal/Assistant Principal (30), Coordinator/Director of a program such as Title I (22) and General or Subject Supervisors (18). Other titles include: Specialist, Counselor, and School Psychologist (Questions #2a and 2b).

Most had been teachers for 4-15 years, then began their administrative careers in the 1970s and 1980s. While most have been administrators for 11+ years, most are in their current administrative position for less than 5 years (Questions #3 & 4). And because of this longevity, they are well-known practitioners in their counties.

Affiliations and Expertise

They most frequently belong to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) and at least one other state or national, subject-related, professional association (Question #5). They also subscribe most frequently to ASCD's journal Educational Leadership or the popular national newspaper, Education Week (Question #6).

These central office supervisors report that special expertise in communications skills, grant writing, and knowledge of national trends allow them to be successful. In addition, they report specialized knowledge in areas such as school law, technology, special education and public relations, and certain state initiatives such as School-To-Work. They also report they have contacts with state experts to include other county educators, the state department, RESAs, and business. Only one reported contact with higher education (Question #7).

Knowledge of School Reform

These central office supervisors feel "very knowledgeable" about state school reform issues. The sources of this knowledge include state department sponsored

meetings/workshops (43), state department mailings (41), communications with administrators in other counties (35), their superintendent (29), RESA sponsored meetings/workshops (29), and county sponsored workshops/meetings (25). Thus, supervisors feel very knowledgeable about state reform and learn about it primarily through some meetings/training and through the state department of education (Question #8).

They feel "somewhat" knowledgeable about national school reform issues. They receive national reform information from their professional association publications (41), state department sponsored meetings/workshops (29), readings (23), communications with administrators in other counties (19), and attendance of national meetings of professional associations (16) (Question #9).

Forces Affecting Position

Only one-fourth (11 of 47) report that their administrative job had been jeopardized in the last 10 years. Precipitating factors include: a decrease in enrollment (7), a decrease in funds (5), or a conflict with an individual, teachers' group, other administrators or school board (6) (Question #10). State legislation (21), paperwork (20), funding (17), and federal legislation (14) have had the most impact on their current position (Question #11).

In summary, the following is a profile of the study's respondents:

- are long-time residents in the county in which they work,
- have a job title other than "supervisor,"
- are likely to have been a teacher and began their varied administrative career history in the 1970s that included Principal/Assistant Principal or General or Special Supervisor and Coordinator/director of a program such as Title I,
- are members of ASCD and one other state or national professional association and subscribe to Educational Leadership and Education Week,
- are skilled in communications, grant writing, and knowledge of national trends and specialized information,
- feel "very knowledgeable" about state school reform issues, but only "somewhat" knowledgeable about national school reform issues. They receive state reform information from state department sponsored meetings/workshops, and national reform information from readings and the state department.
- only a few report that their administrative job had been jeopardized in the last 10 years due to a decrease in enrollment or funds, or a conflict with an individual, teachers' group, other administrators or school board.
- state and federal legislation, paperwork and funding have had the most impact on their current position.

Those interviewed follow this same profile with some exceptions as reflected in Questions 2, 4 and 10. Ten were male and ten were female. Males primarily held the current job title of Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent and tended to be in administration

longer (16+ years), having begun their administrative career in the 1970s, than the females (under 15) who began their administrative career in the 1980s. Also a higher percentage (6 or one-third compared with one-fourth of the respondents) report that their jobs have been jeopardized within the past ten years.

Education Administration
West Virginia University
College of Human Resources and Education

September 11,1997

Dear Practitioner:

This is a letter to invite you to participate in a research study. Its goal is to tell the perspectives and stories of selected individuals who practice supervision in a rural state and who have been pioneers in initiating and sustaining school reform. You have been selected to participate because you:

- are responsible (in whole or in part) for: curriculum development, staff development, and/or classroom visitation, and thus practice supervision,
- have been employed in an administrative capacity (not necessarily the same) for at least 10 years in West Virginia, and thus have a "wisdom" and historical perspective, and
- may have a story to tell about a reform initiative, a court case, or the implementation of state policy.

Your participation is strictly voluntary and your anonymity will be maintained as the results are reported.

This study involves two methods of data collection: a questionnaire and an interview. You may choose your level of participation in this study: 1) questionnaire only or 2) questionnaire and interview. You may choose just to complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the stamped, self-addressed envelope. Or, you may complete and return the questionnaire and participate in an interview.

A list of sample questions called "Draft Interview Protocol" is included for your review. This interview will be audio-taped at a time and place in your county, unless we will be conveniently attending a meeting elsewhere. You may also be asked to read and respond to a summary of your interview or a draft of the report.

If you agree to be interviewed, I offer one of the following services to be redeemed with reasonable notice:

a workshop on some aspect of mentoring, teacher evaluation, supervision, direction-giving, questioning strategies, teacher/administrator portfolios, or workshop design, or

feedback on an innovation, policy, procedure, report, survey, public relations material, or staff development, or

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Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action Institution

consulting on administrator goal-setting, long-range planning, a teacher, administrator induction, a confidential problem, or career counseling.

I am expected to annually conduct research and provide service to the public schools as part of my role as a university professor. This research is being conducted and service is offered to partially meet these expectations.

Enclosed please find the Questionnaire, Draft Interview Protocol, and the self-addressed, stamped envelope. If you are interested in participating in this research, please return the Questionnaire in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope by September 26. By writing in your name on the questionnaire, you are indicating your willingness to be interviewed, and your interest in receiving one of the services listed.

Thank you for your support in helping me to advance knowledge about supervision and rural school reform in West Virginia!

Sincerely,

Helen M. Hazi, Ph.D.
Professor

293-3707 x1429 (O)
293-2279 (Fax)
598-0669 (H)
hhazi@wvu.edu (e-mail)

Supervisors & School Reform
Questionnaire

Directions: The following information will be used to describe the population. Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to respond to every item. Your responses are anonymous. Confidentiality will be maintained during and after the study.

If you agree to complete this questionnaire, return it by September 26, 1997.

If you agree to be interviewed, please write in your name.

Name:_____(Optional)

1.a. County: _____

b. Are you a resident of this county? ____Yes___No
c. If yes, how long have you lived in this county?_____

2.a. Current Job title: _____

b. Check (√) those previous administrative job titles held:

___Assistant Principal
___Principal (__Elem, __Middle,__ Secondary)
___Counselor
___Supervisor of _____
___Specialist

___Coordinator/Director of_____

___Assistant Superintendent

___Other:_____

_____

3. Years as a teacher: ___0 ___4-10 ___16+
___1-3 ___11-15

4. a. Years in administration: __1-5 ___11-15
____6-10 ___16+

b. Approximate year of your first administrative appointment 19___.

c. Number of years in current position: _____

5. Member of the following professional associations:
___NASSP/NAESP
___ASCD ___NEA
___AASA ___Other:_____

_____

--- OVER ---

6. Journals to which you subscribe: ___Educational Leadership ___Education Week
___NASSP/NAESP Bulletin ___Executive Educator
___Other:_____

_____

7. What special expertise do you have that has allowed you to be successful?

___Grantwriting
___Communications skills
___Contacts with :_____
___Knowledge of national trends
___Other: _____

8.a. How knowledgeable do you feel about <u>state</u> school reform issues? Check (√) <u>one:</u>

____Very Knowledgeable ____Very little
____Somewhat ____Not at all knowledgeable

b. How do you get your information about <u>state</u> school reform issues? Check (√) <u>all</u> those that apply:

___My superintendent
___County sponsored workshops/meetings
___State department sponsored meetings/workshops
___State department mailings/postings
___RESA sponsored meetings/workshops
___Meetings/workshops sponsored by_____
___Communications with administrators in other counties
___Other:_____

9. a. How knowledgeable do you feel about <u>national</u> school reform issues? Check (√) <u>one</u>:

____Very Knowledgeable ____Very little
____Somewhat ____Not at all knowledgeable

b. How do you get your information about <u>national</u> school reform issues? Check (√) <u>all</u> those that apply:

___Attendance at national meetings of _____
___State department sponsored meetings/workshops
___Communications with administrators in other counties
___Publications of my professional association(s)
___By reading_____
___I attend more to state reform issues
___Other:_____

_____

10. Has your administrative job ever been jeopardized in the last 10 years? __Yes__No

<u>If yes, check (√) all</u> those that apply as precipitating factors:
___Decrease in enrollment
___Implementation of a reform
___Decrease in funds
___Grievance threatened/filed by an individual
___Conflict with a teachers' group
Conflict with other administrators

___Conflict with school board
___Conflict with citizen/community
___Other:_____

_____

11. What has had the most impact (positive or negative) on your current position? (Check only two)

___funding

___paperwork

___a court case: (Give name_____)

___state legislation (Bill Number/name_____)

___federal legislation (Act number/name_____)

___local incident (Give brief description_____

_____)

___Other (Specify_____)

Thank you for your time and response.

Please return by September 26 in the enclosed envelope.

DRAFT
Interview Protocol

Do Not Complete or return
Will be asked during interview

The following general questions represent the preliminary focus of the approximately 1 hour interview. Probes will be asked, depending upon answers given and phase of the study.

1. What successes have you had with school reform in your county?

2. What has been your attitude toward school reform?

3. What have been the school reform challenges and controversies?

4. How have teachers responded to school reform?

5. What tensions exist between administration and teachers (if any) and why?

6. How has your role changed as a result of school reform?

7. How have you used state initiatives to advance change in your county?

8. What training has been most useful to you in advancing your county's reform agenda?

9. What stories do you have about your involvement with a reform initiative, court case/grievance, or situation in your county?

10. How do you feel about the future of education in the county, in the state?

11. What is the future of school reform in your county, in the state?

Other

Appendix A
Interview Protocol
LITERATURE BASES OF QUESTIONS

The following general questions represent the preliminary focus of the approximately 1 hour interview. Probes will be asked, depending upon answers given and phase of the study.

SF=SCHOOL REFORM	P=POLICY	R=RURAL
S=SUPERVISION	C=CURRICULUM	*=PREVIOUS RESEARCH
O=GENDER	F=Survey Follow-up	

1. What **successes** have you had **with school reform** in your county? (3 categories: Upgrading Curriculum, Teacher/administrator Quality, Administrative--Appendix A/B)
   SF,P

   How has your **special expertise** helped you to be successful?
   F,S, Q

   What training has been most useful?
   O

2. What are the **"tools"** you use to move the county's reform agenda? (curriculum guides, test analysis, classroom observation, curriculum material purchase, staff development)
   P

3. What **approach** has your county taken **to school reform**? (compliance/ above and beyond state mandates; Assertive, Insulated, Reactive, locus of control)
   P, R

   How have you used state mandates to advance change in your county?
   C

   Do you feel the county has made **progress**?
   *

   How has this **progress** been **reported** to staff and community?
   *

4. What 's happening in the county with the **pressures for increased test scores**, decreased dropout rate, etc.?
   S F

   What have you done to alleviate these pressures?

5. How are **teachers responding to school reform** (* use TABLE)?

How do you feel about school reform? (similar/new categories?)
*, P,R

6. What have been **reform challenges and controversies** in the county?
SF,P

a.How does **ruralness** affect these challenges?
R

b. What is the current **climate for reform**?

7. What **tensions** exist between administration and teachers (if any) and why?
S

Principals are supposed to be **instructional leaders.** How does your competence in this area affect your relationship with principals?

8. How has your role changed as a result of school reform?
S, C

a. **residency/lack of residency in the county** affected your role?

b. Do you have a **visible/invisible** position within the county?
S

c.**Tensions** with other administrators?

d. (If a woman), how has **gender** influenced your position?

e. paper work, decrease in funds/personnel (Q)

9. Has your job been jeopardized in the last 10 years? Tell me about the incident. (Q)

10. What is the **future of school reform** in your county, in the state?
R

Is there anything you'd like to tell me about school reform or your position as a central office supervisor that I've not asked you about?

Appendix B

SUMMARY

"Supervisors & School Reform Questionnaire." (T=47)

1.a. County Responses from 32 of 55 counties

RESA I =3	RESA II =7	RESA III =2	RESA IV =3
Raleigh(1)	Cabell(2)	Boone(2)	Braxton(2)
Mercer (1)	Logan (1)		Greenbrier(1)
Summers(1)	Lincoln (1)		
	Wayne (2)		
	Mason (1)		

RESA V =6	RESA VI =4	RESA VII =12	RESA VIII =4
Tyler(1)	Wetzel(1)	Randolph(1)	Berkeley(1)
Roane(1)	Ohio(1)	Harrison(1)	Mineral(2)
Pleasant(1)	Marshall(1)	Lewis(1)	Hardy(1)
Wood(2)	Hancock(1)	Monongalia(1)	
Wirt(1)		Taylor(1)	
		Barbour(2)	
		Upshur(3)	
		Preston(1)	
		Marion(1)	

TOTAL= 41
None= 6

b. Are you a resident of this county? **__40__**Yes**__7__**No

c. If yes, how long have you lived in this county?_____

0-20 years= **8** 21-40 years = **11** 41 years+ = **18**

None = **9**

2.a. Current Job title: _____

COORDINATORS
Special Education Coordinator
Coordinator Reading Language Arts
Secondary Curriculum Coordinator
Secondary Instructional Specialist
LD Specialist
Coordinator

DIRECTORS
Executive Director
(3) Director/Assistant Director of Special Education
Director of Federal Pr.

(5) Director -Title I (Title I Director/Elementary Coordinator)
Director, General Education
(5) Director of C&I
Director of Student Services (2) & Attendance
Administrative Assistant for Elementary/Director of Federal Pr.

ADMINISTRATORS
(10) Assistant Superintendent
Associate Superintendent
(2) Superintendent
(2) Administrator
Administrative Assistant
Principal
Elementary Supervisor

SUPERVISORS
Middle School Supervisor, Math/Science
Supervisor/Project Director
General Supervisor
Supervisor- Curriculum, Staff Development, Textbooks, Personnel

b. Check (√) those previous administrative job titles held:

__22__Coordinator/Director of_____

1) K-12, General Ed.
2) Student Services and Attendance (2)
3) Curriculum (7)
4) Primary/Middle School Ed.
5) Staff Devel.(4)
6) Special Educ.(4); of IEPs (1)
7) Off-Campus Pro.
8) Textbook
9) Federal Prog.(3)
10) Title I (2)
11) Title IX, Sec. 504 Home Schooling

__19__Principal (_10_Elem, _6_Middle,_7_ Secondary)

__18__Supervisor of _____

1) Special Educ.
2) Reading (3)
3) Curriculum (4)
4) Title I
5) Research Evaluation
6) Mathematics
7) Math and Science(2)

8) Secondary Ed.(2)
9) General Instruction and Vocational Ed
10) Early Childhood/Elementary Pr.(2)

__11__Assistant Principal

__11__Other:_____

1) Dir. of Safe and Drug-free Schools & Student Services & Attendance)
2) Traveling Teachers, Student Teacher, Elementary Supervisor, School Calendar
3) Resource Teacher
4) Assistant Sp. Ed. Director (2)
5) Coordinator Staff Dev.; Title I, Title II; Textbooks; Technology
6) School Psychologist & Coordinator of Testing Services
7) Superintendent
8) Administrative Assistant
9) Director of Evaluation for Federal Programs
10) AD

__9__Assistant Superintendent

__8__ Specialist

__5__Counselor

3. Years as a teacher: _____

0 years = **0** 1-3 years = **4**

4-10 years= **25** 11-15 years = **11**

16 years+= **7**

4. a. Years in administration: _____

1-5 years = **1** 6-10 years = **8**

11-15 years = **15** 16 years+ = **23**

b. Approximate year of your first administrative appointment 19___.

1968-1970= **5** 1971-1980= **18**

1981-1990= **22** 1991+= **1**

None= **1**

c. Number of years in current position: _____

0-5 years= **17** 6-10 years = **13** 11-15 years = **12**

16-20 years = **4** 21 years+= **1**

5. Member of the following professional associations:

__**26**__ASCD

__**22**__Other: _____

1) WV Council of Special Educ; National Assoc. of School Psych.; WV School Psych. Assoc.; Delta Kappa Gamma
2) International Reading Assoc (**2**); Nat. Council of Teachers of English
3) WV School Personnel Assoc.(WVSPA)(**3**); AASPA(**2**)
4) CEC
5) CLD, Ass. Direct. Instruc.
6) NCTM (**3**), WVASA(**4**), WVCA
7) WV Council of Admin. of Sp Ed (2)
8) WVAMLE, NMSA, WUSTA,
9) WVEA (**2**)
10) PDK (**4**)
11) NABT, ACS
12) Nat Science Teachers Assoc. (**7**)

__**20**__NEA

__**11**__AASA

__**8**__NASSP/NAESP

None= **2**

6. Journals to which you subscribe:

__**27**__ Educational Leadership

__**21**__ Education Week

__**15**__ Other:_____

1) Many technology sources
2) I read other colleagues' journals or articles or articles when they share them with me
3) Reading Teacher (2)
4) Language Arts
5) School Psych. Review
6) P.D.K. (3)
7) Futurist, Law Journal
8) RASE, Journal Learning Dis., Teaching Except. Child (4)
9) Ed. Law; Special Educator
10) Teacher, Curriculum Supervision
11) State notes for SIM TRAINERS, Focus on Excep. Children
12) Math Journal
13) MS Journal Scope
14) Science Teacher, Chem. Ed., Biology Teacher, Scientific American

__6__ Executive Educator

__4__ NASSP/NAESP Bulletin

None= **10**

7. What special expertise do you have that has allowed you to be successful?

__35__Communications skills

__23__Grantwriting

__24__Knowledge of national trends

__21__Other:_____

1) Knowledge of teaching & learning, prob. solving skills
2) Content knowledge, interpersonal skills
3) Policy and procedures; Sp. Educ. compliance
4) School-to-work, jobs through Educ. Act, Voc=Techn. Educ.
5) Wide Grad. training in Ed. psych, special education, Educ. Adm.
6) Organizational skills
7) Job responsibilities in all areas of Sp. Educ.
8) Staff Dev. expertise
9) Knowledge of state trends and Programs (2)
10) Reading
11) Ability to write policies, procedures, and design forms Computer abilities. Knowledge of county/State regulations
12) Knowledge of the positions I have held
13) Entrenched in the community
14) Willingness to go to other areas/conferences to get ideas willingness to plan events for teachers/students
15) Ability to work well with groups of people.
16) Specialized training M.A., M.S., C.A.G.S., Ed.D.
17) Human Resource Management

18) Knowledge of all aspects of school matters (school law, board policy, Technology)
19) Public Relations
20) Ability to work hard, organizational skills, practical application of education/management theory
21) School law

__14__Contacts with :_____

1) Administrative Colleagues and Professional Associations
2) WVDE, Regional ASCD
3) State, county contacts
4) State Department (2)
5) Dept. of Educ ; Superintendents; Asst. Sup.
6) RESA II M/S Supervisor
7) Local Business /Industry
8) Specialists in areas of concern
9) Experts in the fields of Educ.
10) Industry/Labor/Parents/Educators
11) University of Kansas, Univer. of Oregon
12) National, State, Local
13) Other school systems, Colleges + Universities

None = 3

8.a. How knowledgeable do you feel about <u>state</u> school reform issues? Check (√) <u>one:</u>

__30__Very Knowledgeable __0__Very little

__17__Somewhat __0__Not at all knowledgeable

b. How do you get your information about <u>state</u> school reform issues? Check (√) <u>all</u> those that apply:

__43__State department sponsored meetings/workshops

__41__State department mailings/postings

__35__Communications with administrators in other counties

__29__My superintendent

__28__RESA sponsored meetings/workshops

__25__County sponsored workshops/meetings

__11__Meetings/workshops sponsored by_____

1) Title I and other Federal Programs
2) Title II
3) Center for Professional Dev.(2)

4) WVUOC. Administrators Assoc.
5) School-to-work (3)
6) WV CASE
7) Professional Associations
8) Regional ASCD
9) WVSPA

__6__Other:_____

1) Participation on State Curriculum Committees
2) Graduate classes(2)
3) Member Gov's Comm. on Educ. (SB 1 and 8)
4) Principals Academy
5) Communications with principals who have information

9. a. How knowledgeable do you feel about national school reform issues? Check (√) one:

__11__Very Knowledgeable __1__Very little

__33__Somewhat __1__Not at all knowledgeable

None = 1

b. How do you get your information about national school reform issues? Check (√) all those that apply:

__41__Publications of my professional association(s)

__29__State department sponsored meetings/workshops

__23__By reading_____

1) Newspapers(4)
2) Books on issues(3)
3) A variety of news
4) Newsweek or Internet stories
5) Journals(4), books, news magazines(3)
6) Widely(2)
7) Education Week(3)
8) NEA News Publications(3)
9) Research articles, Government publication
10) Monitor, Title I
11) Coursework
12) Everything re education (public)

__19__Communications with administrators in other counties

__16__Attendance at national meetings of _____

1) IRA (3), Title I (4), Education Dept. Improving America's Schools
2) AASA(2) and NASSP/NAESP
3) Early Ed., etc.
4) HSTW(2), STW (3)
5) NSTA (2), ASCD (3)
6) School-to-work(2)
7) CEC
8) CLD
9) Personnel
10) Math

__8__ I attend more to state reform issues

__7__ Others: _____

1) TV news
2) Internet
3) I don't take "reform movements" as seriously as I used to because many are insignificant and are not followed through with.
4) Title I, school wide projects
5) Graduate Classes
6) Regional ASCD meeting
7) National "popular" press and magazines

10. Has your administrative job ever been jeopardized in the last 10 years?

__11__Yes __33__No None = 3

If yes, check (√) all those that apply as precipitating factors:

__7__Decrease in enrollment

__3__Implementation of a reform

__5__Decrease in funds

__2__Grievance threatened/filed by an individual

__1__Conflict with a teachers' group

__2__Conflict with other administrators

__1__Conflict with school board

__0__Conflict with citizen/community

__2__Other:_____

1) Significant lack of leadership/mission/goals on part of Supt. & Board
2) Decrease of administrations to respond to deficit

11. What has had the most impact (positive or negative) on your current position? (Check only two)

__21__ state legislation (Bill Number/name_____)

1) SB 300 (15)
2) State policy change
3) 300 and related policies
4) 2510
5) Jobs through Educ. Act (positive)

__20__ paperwork

__17__ funding

__14__ federal legislation (Act number/name_____)

1) IDEA(6)
2) ESEA (IASA)(2) Title I(7)
3) 94-142
4) Title II, IV, VI.
5) School to work (3)
6) Improving America's school Act part A

__6__ local incident (Give brief description_____)

1) Change in administration
2) Having my position and authority challenged by school Board members who support teachers + service personnel who want to oust superintendent and those who support him (i.e. myself)
3) Lack of leadership/mission/goals and part of Supt. and Board
4) In addition to all previous responsibilities, I now do all personnel
5) Resignation of popular superintendent
6) School-to-work

__4__ Other (Specify_____)

1) Board
2) Supportive, rational local Board of Educ. Superintendent who makes wise fiscal decisions
3) Reduction of central/office Staff + assuming more responsibilities.(negative)
4) Requirements of W.V.E.I.S.

__1__ a court case: (Give name_____)

1) Supreme Ct case re; Levy and Mercer Co., Cahill Ct al vs. Mercer County Bd.

None = 2